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ABSTRACT

This paper examines different approaches to global studies through a selective analysis of the theory in the field. Key questions are posed as criteria for deciding which issues are most adequately suited for study in an issues-based curriculum. Results of a limited survey of high school students who completed a course in global education are presented and analyzed. The paper advocates global studies to orient students to their role (current and future) as members of a new civic culture. (EH)

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Global Studies in an Issues-Centered Curriculum

By

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"Global Studies in an Issues-Centered Curriculum"

Global studies represents the most viable framework for organizing issues-centered studies. This paper examines different approaches to global studies through a selective analysis of the theory in the field. Key questions are posed as criteria for deciding which issues are most adequately suited for study in an issues-based curriculum. Results of a limited survey of high school students who completed a course in global education are presented and analyzed.

Global studies provides a sound foundation upon which to construct an issues-oriented social studies curriculum. Global studies best satisfies one of the main responsibilities of the social studies: it orients students to their role, current and future, as members of a new civic culture. The new role of global citizenship, described by Boulding (1988), involves a much broader range of challenges and responsibilities. The emergence of a global civic culture offers more points of access to policy-making for citizens. The rapidly increasing number of international non-governmental organizations (approximately 18,000), for example, provide more points of access to social, political, economic and cultural issues than ever before (Boulding 1988 and Kniep 1989).

Global citizenship, however, is elusive since contentious issues require in-depth knowledge of systems and the acuity to act on that information on many different levels. Issues do not exist

in the vacuum of domestic affairs; rather, they transcend international boundaries and therefore require global policy. Since issues occur in a social context that is increasingly global, a prerequisite to studying issues is to gain a thorough understanding of the global system.

The need for global studies as the foundation of issues-centered curricula is also apparent in light of economic trends. The world's once separate economies have been incorporated in varying degrees into a single, global economy (Anderson 1982), a trend evidenced by arrangements such as the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement. Economic barriers of distance, time, and space disappear rapidly with advances in telecommunications technology (eg. fax machines and the internet), rapidity of travel, and fluidity of international business transactions. Students participate in the global economy directly, and would therefore be well served with a richer understanding of these economic forces. Issues occur against the backdrop of global economic conditions, as illustrated by the increased awareness about the limits of fossil fuels brought on by the energy crises of the early and late 1970's. The examination of issues, therefore, is linked directly to understanding the global economic dynamic.

Global studies provides a pedagogical framework broad enough to encompass all the issues relevant to social studies education. Willard Kniep formulated four essential elements of global education, which illustrate the broad scope of the field,

-study of systems (economic, political, ecological, technological)
-study of human values (universal and diverse)
-study of persistent problems (war and peace, human rights, environmental issues)
-study of global history (development of global systems and human values)

(Kniep 1989)

Kniep (1989) proposed themes as the organizing framework for global education, for which he presents a K-12 scope and sequence. Thematic inquiry, where a general concept is applied to a variety of specific cases, is similar to an issues-oriented approach. If the new direction for social studies is issues-oriented curricula, then it would be best to select an established field like global studies which rests on similar assumptions. These assumptions include themes as a foundation, study of systems, and examination of persitent problems.

Global studies is cohesive and holistic, meaning it is both unifying and diverse, drawing from a range of knowledge bases. Human beings are complex organisms, with thought, speech, emotion, and psychomotor activities occurring simultaneously. Education designed for teaching holistic beings should be approached in a way that unites and diversifies sources of knowledge, rather than dividing and categorizing (Kniep 1989). Issues-centered education is by definition a holistic endeavor since issues rarely fit neatly into only one field of study. Global studies is an area of the social studies that is the most holistic, uniting such diverse content areas as psychology, peace education, geography, and economics, which makes it defensible and desirable as a choice for

developing an issues-centered curriculum.

The great diversity of global studies presents curriculum designers with a series of advantages and disadvantages. Detractors of global studies have attacked the field for its relative lack of clarity. Theoreticians and curriculum designers within global studies have not reached agreement about what makes up the core of the field. Since global studies has been developed and redefined by scholars from a range of academic backgrounds, the clarity of a curricular scope and sequence for global studies is indeed muddled (Reardon 1988). This quandary is not unique to global education, however, since all curriculum development requires that choices be made about scope and sequence. This weakness may indeed be a significant advantage to global studies in developing an issues-centered curriculum. Since there is some agreement about what constitutes global studies, there remains some latitude within the field to shape an issues orientation.

The manifestations of global studies and debate about its scope and sequence are beyond the scope of this paper. It is necessary, however, to outline some of the approaches and rationales of global studies to draw out the key principles upon which development of an issues-oriented curricula can occur. The following list summarizes the major approaches to global studies, outlining the rationale, goals, and content for each area.

World History	Study of world history promotes understanding of how society has changed over time. World history hopes to inform students about what are the possibilities and parameters of the present. Content is usually organized around major eras and developments (eg. development of cities, nation-states, agriculture) (Reilly c.f. Woyach & Remy 1989).
World Order	Study of the world which emphasizes the holistic nature of humans and planetary systems. The starting point of world order education is determining what problems exist and how to synthesize knowledge to have students better understand problems and create solutions for today. Knowledge is only one element of understanding, however; attitudes, perspectives, and values are also seen as crucial to world order advocates. This category of global education has also been referred to as "transnational studies," and "peace education." (Weston 1975)
World Geography	Study of how the world's physical and human phenomena are distributed on the Earth's surface. The beginning point of this inquiry follows poses these questions: where are the phenomenon located and why do they occur in these areas? Geography is inherently interdependent in its origins, making it a desirable foundation for world studies. Content includes places, populations, and physical and human characteristics of the Earth (Smith c.f. Woyach & Remy 1989).
International Relations	Study of the nation-state system and how it functions. Political scientists in this field believe that there are discernible, "scientific" laws of international relations, mostly related to how nations get along with each other. The development and refinement of these types of these theorems is a prominent goal of international relations. Content includes the study of the world political system as well as the conflict and cooperation that exists on the world stage among these prominent forces (McGowan & Woyach c.f. Woyach & Remy 1989).

Historical/World Cultures	Study of the historical development of the human species to discover who and where we are. Through examining the culture of students and the variety of cultural forms emergent in history, students gain a sense of self and other in a global context. Key concepts include culture, civilization, kinship, role, and contract and how these different social needs have been fulfilled diversely by historical cultures (Bohannan c.f. Woyach & Remy 1989).
Foreign Policy Studies	Study of the interactions of nations from the perspective of one's national interests. This approach differs from international relations in that it emphasizes the decision-making of a country vis-a-vis other nations. This approach can be historical, contemporary, or both, so long as it rests on the idea of national interests and national involvement with foreign nations. Content in the context of the United States has focused upon the bipolarity of the Cold War. Emphasis is placed on the analysis of foreign policy decision-making and the extent to which it best serves national interests (Graseck 1993).

Comparative World Studies (CWS) is a global studies course which is part of the social studies graduation requirement at Hunterdon Central High School in Flemington, New Jersey. This global studies course is an issues-based curriculum which includes four major units: Tradition and Change (cultural anthropology study of contemporary world cultures), International Human Rights (study of the evolution of the notion of rights in various cultural settings), Global Security (study of international relations, emphasizing the nature of conflict and security on a global scale), and Global Environmental Challenge (examination of environmental issues). The course represents a hybrid of global studies

approaches, with elements of different global education approaches united in a cohesive whole. Since CWS is issues-oriented and a global hybrid, it will be used to illustrate the criteria for creating a global issues curricula and to report some exploratory data about the relative effectiveness of this approach.

What should the criteria be for making judgments about which issues fall legitimately within the scope of a global issues-centered education? How do the various global studies advocacy positions detailed above shape the criteria? The following questions were developed by analyzing the various approaches to global studies and distilling aspects of each into a set of criteria.

1. Does the issue have local and global examples which illustrate it in concrete terms?

2. Does the issue allow for reflective inquiry, recognizing the value-oriented nature of inquiry?

3. Does the issue encourage students to examine multiple perspectives?

4. Does the issue allow for holistic, multidisciplinary inquiry, drawing from a wide range of human knowledge and experience?

5. Does the issue provide opportunities for prescriptive, participatory student action?

6. Does the issue include viewpoints from groups other than nation-states as monolithic actors, such as international non-governmental organizations?

7. Does the issue encourage active student learning?

1. Does the issue have local and global examples which illustrate it in concrete terms?

Issues should have concrete examples to draw from and inform the concept in teaching about them. Kniep (1989) asserts that conceptual understanding is built upon repeated contact with a variety of real-life exemplars of the concept to be developed. Students should not be asked to grapple with sophisticated issues like terrorism without a variety of examples of how this issue exists in the real world. If global issues-centered education is to be meaningful, concepts and examples should be linked repeatedly and diversely.

Students also need to become conversant with the idea of local-global connections. This approach helps students see global affairs as more manageable, gain access to channels of participation, and increase the sense of relevancy to their lives (Woyach and Remy 1982). Issues of local importance are reflected in global settings and vice-versa. Issues should be presented with a keen recognition of this reality to further enhance the depth of conceptual understanding.

To further enhance the local-global connections, schools may establish programs like "Your Community in the World and The World in Your Community" and foreign student/teacher exchanges. Approaches that link student communities with communities in other parts of the world, help young people grasp the universality of the human condition (Boulding 1988 and Wilson 1982). Since issues are multi-faceted topics of learning, the ability for students to

empathize with different cultural interpretations of problems will make them more adroit at understanding complex issues.

In the cultural studies unit of CWS, students are encouraged to compare their cultural norms with various cultural groups. The Yanomamo of Venezuela and Brazil are studied as an example of a traditional, indigenous culture with similar human needs as people in modern society, but with different cultural ways of fulfilling these needs. Trough this study, students are shown that similarities exist within human culture and how "distant" peoples share more similarities than differences.

2. Does the issue allow for reflective inquiry, recognizing the value-oriented nature of knowledge?

Issues-centered education should encourage students to think openly and critically about the problem at hand with the widest variety of information available to them. Issues should be approached with a guiding notion of relative truth rather than the closed type of study fostered by a positivistic position. Issues, like nuclear proliferation, are surrounded by changing conditions that make the truth highly contextual, and therefore relative. Negotiations between the Soviet Union and United States used to be the focus of nuclear disarmament. However, the focus has recently shifted to the emergence of potential nuclear states such as North Korea, Iran and Iraq. Such issues tend to be highly fluid, thus requiring a recognition of the relativity of truth. Weston (1975) suggests that knowledge is a social construction and is therefore

value-oriented and relative. Students and teachers in issues-centered education need to be constantly aware and sensitive about this phenomenon as they inquire about global issues, since they will be continually confronted with this reality.

The issue of perspective is addressed throughout CWS, as exemplified by the study of female genital mutilation or female circumcision in some regions of sub-Saharan Africa. Students grapple with the issue of ancient cultural traditions that seem to violate modern notions of dignity and human worth. The issue requires that students examine many interpretations of this practice and develop a reflective position on this controversy, in light of the tension between universal rights and cultural traditions.

3. Does the issue encourage students to examine multiple perspectives?

An issues-centered approach requires students to analyze an array of perspectives. Anderson (1982) writes: "students must recognize that their own view of the world is not universally shared, that this view has been and continues to be shaped by influences that often escape their conscious detection." Issues-oriented global education should encourage students to first see, and later critically examine many viewpoints, since issues are inherently multi-faceted. The literature about global education is replete with references to "global consciousness" and "awareness." Hanvey (1982) describes these states, respectively, as the

understanding that one's view of the world is not universally shared and the recognition that individuals are part of a larger planetary system, which is dynamic and developing. The nature of the issues considered should be such that they promote thinking from a variety of perspectives. Practitioners of issues-oriented education should discourage students from accepting the "right" viewpoint, which more often than not will validate their own cultural disposition. Rather, students should examine the various cultural interpretations of "truth" in a way that helps them develop tolerance towards others as well as the notion of competing truths, which is fundamental to global education (Wronski 1987).

The study of the Bosnian civil war as approached in CWS illustrates how this criteria might be satisfied in a global issues framework. This unit involves students taking on various positions in the conflict and researching their perspectives on the conflicts. Students then share their perspectives, as Bosnian-Serbs, Muslims, and Croats, for example, to begin a dialogue about how peace might be achieved. Through this role-play activity, students learn directly how perspective affects international issues, specifically conflicts over territory and sovereignty.

4. Does the issue allow for holistic, multidisciplinary inquiry, drawing from a wide range of human knowledge and experience?

This criterion holds that no one discipline is paramount in

the study of issues. Information should be drawn from established areas of knowledge, the extent to which these fields can provide insight into the issue being studied. Global education draws from a variety of fields of knowledge that constitute much of the social studies. Hanvey (1982) lists some of the fields that constitute global education. He includes economics, politics, environmental studies, law, international relations, and technology. Global issues are complex enough to have linkages to many field of study. To focus on only one aspect of an issue distorts the issue, ignoring other vital concerns.

The study of tropical deforestation in CWS offers insight into the interdisciplinary approach. Students begin by examining the rainforest as a complex, interdependent system. The use of scientific concepts such as carrying capacity, albedo effect, genetic extinction, and biodiversity are fundamental to this issue. Students engage in creative expressions (drawing posters, writing poetry, making films) related to the biodiversity of the rainforest, thus uniting earth science with fine arts through the study of global issues.

5. Does the issue provide opportunities for prescriptive, participatory student action?

Civic competence has been touted as one of the fundamental purposes of social studies education. As Newmann (1975) writes, if the justification for state-sponsored compulsory education is the

preservation of the democratic state, public schools should teach children how to participate in a democracy. Accepting this premise, issues should be identified which encourage student participation in the global village. To select issues into which students can have no meaningful input will likely frustrate students and teachers out of a sense of futility.

Avenues exist which can assist teachers and students in making meaningful action on global concerns. Alger and Hoovler (1978) depict a series of steps that students can pursue to address global issues at personal, local, state/provincial, national, and international levels. Many of these steps encourage students to seek information and guidance from non-governmental organizations. Structures like these, when fleshed out with organizations and contacts relevant to the issues being examined, will help students express their views and advocate positions on issues of concern to them. Issues-education should encourage thoughtful civic competence if it is to adequately serve the social studies, and the means exist in many forms to accomplish this task.

Students are required as part of CWS to complete two social action projects throughout the course. These projects range widely in terms of the issues addressed. Students have engaged in a myriad of civic activities, such as: letter campaigns on behalf of prisoners of conscience, awareness and fund-raising for INGOs dedicated to preserving tropical rainforests, petitions to the United Nations and various heads of state advocating the protection of indigenous peoples, and teaching younger children about

recycling and waste stream reduction.

6. Does the issue include viewpoints from groups other than nation-states as monolithic actors, such as international non-governmental organizations?

The development of regional organizations, however, such as NAFTA, the European Community, and the Organization of American States, indicates that the nation-state system may not always be the dominant framework of the global system. Nations like the now defunct Yugoslavia are losing their grip as self-determination increases globally (Kegley 1993). Moreover, nations do not act as single entities with one voice. Most issues do not recognize international political boundaries in their impacts, so teaching about issues should reflect this reality.

An element of the CWS curriculum is a school-wide United Nations simulation. This simulation includes nation-states, groups with observer status in the UN, and INGOs as part of the debate. Students research policy positions, develop resolutions and position papers, and develop through debate UN policy on a range of issues. Students are shown that there are many different players on the world stage of decision-making and they become acquainted with some of these divergent viewpoints. Students also recognize through their research that nations are not unified in positions on issues. Through this simulation, students confront the reality that issues transcend sovereign political boundaries and require global action.

7. Does the issue encourage active student learning?

As John Dewey (1916) said, people learn by doing. Students in an issues class should be actively engaged in their learning. One of the main purposes of issues-centered education is to have students become critical inquirers, able to digest information about an issue and act upon their reasoned positions. This cannot occur in a classroom where the only person actively thinking is the teacher.

Global education has long been at the forefront in developing hands-on learning for social studies, including simulations, role-plays, model United Nations, and the like. The Center for Teaching International Relations at the University of Denver has consistently produced many teaching materials about global issues which encourage active learning, such as simulations and role-plays. If active student learning enhances understanding, than a field like global studies which is founded upon this type of pedagogy is a desirable framework for issue-centered education.

Active learning approaches such as simulations, role-playing, discussions, debate, research, and social action projects are the mainstay of CWS. Topic areas have been developed and refined in each unit of study to engage students actively in learning. Examples of these techniques and issues include: a negotiations simulation involving a crisis between two emergent nuclear states, negotiations to refine the Law of the Sea Treaty, historical simulation of the Berlin Conference to colonize Africa, and computer-based, internet enhanced multimedia presentations on

various issues.

PRELIMINARY STUDY OF GLOBAL ISSUES CURRICULUM

One means of evaluating the effectiveness of a global issues-centered curriculum is to examine current practice. Students perceptions of the relative effectiveness of a global issues approach in comparison to a chronological United States history approach may provide insight into this area. In a preliminary study to address this question, the author surveyed students at the end of their global education course (those enrolled in Comparative World Studies), which also marks the end of their participation in the required social studies program at Hunterdon Central Regional High School. In fulfilling the social studies requirements for graduation, the all of the students had taken courses in United States History I (1780-1890), United States History II (1890-present), and Comparative World Studies.

In an effort to gain some insight into the perceptions students have about issues-oriented global education, a limited survey was conducted to ascertain student attitudes. The sample includes students from one semester of a global education course that the author teaches. The sample was not randomly selected since only students in the author's Comparative World Studies classes were surveyed. However, this sample represents approximately one fifth of the junior class (440 students total) and students are randomly assigned to these world studies classes. The sample, therefore, represents a portion of one grade level in a particular high school.

Table IA
"Global Education Student Questionnaire"
N= Range of 70-82 respondents

Q#1= There is a big difference in the information and approaches to teaching US History and Comparative World Studies at Hunterdon Central.
N= 74

	No.	Pct.
Strongly Agree	35	47%
Agree	27	36
Neutral	8	11
Disagree	3	4
Strongly Disagree	1	1

Q#2= United States History would be a better learning experience if it were taught as an issues-oriented course, rather than chronologically.
N= 75

	No.	Pct.
Strongly Agree	21	28%
Agree	30	40
Neutral	14	19
Disagree	8	11
Strongly Disagree	2	3

Q#3= I understand social studies information better when it is presented in a cause and effect, chronological manner.
N= 70

	No.	Pct.
Strongly Agree	3	4%
Agree	12	17
Neutral	27	39
Disagree	25	36
Strongly Disagree	3	4

Q#4= I understand social studies information better when it is presented as an issue that cuts across time and place, as opposed to studying a series of events chronologically.
N=82

	No.	Pct.
Strongly Agree	13	16%
Agree	30	37
Neutral	20	24
Disagree	12	15
Strongly Disagree	7	9

The data seem to indicate that students perceive the different approaches between United States History and Comparative World Studies. Through combining the strongly agree and agree responses for Question #1, a combined 83% of respondents claim there is a "big difference" in the two courses. The results also seem to indicate that students would prefer to have United States History taught in an issues manner, with a combined 68% indicating agreement with Question #2. Students in this survey generally reported a preference for an issues-centered curriculum, with 53% either strongly agreeing or agreeing that they achieved better "understanding of social studies information" in this type of curriculum.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is limited for a number of reasons. The relatively small sample (ranging from 70-82 respondents) was not randomly generated; rather, students participated in the study because they

happened to have the author for their global education class. It is also limited in design since it only seeks to compare student attitudes with one other curriculum. The findings reported herein are tentative at best and need to be examined with this in mind. It would be invalid to generalize from any of the findings from this data due to its inherent limitations.

Evaluating a global issues approach is critical if this curricular area is to be considered viable for the social studies. A significant implication that is apparent from this research is the need for more research into issues-centered global studies. The purpose of this study was not intended to make a judgement about the relative effectiveness of global issues courses, but rather to seek a mode of research that might be effective in evaluating issues-oriented global studies. Towards this end, I seek input from participants in this CUFA session about how to construct more effective methods of research into this area. Some questions which would help me in this pursuit are,

What research techniques have yielded the most relevant data in evaluating curricula?

Which group(s) might best serve as respondents in evaluating a curriculum?

To what extent is comparison with existing social studies curricula effective in evaluating an emerging curriculum?

How have other curricula introduced to the social studies been evaluated?

Have there been other studies which have attempted to evaluate issues-centered curricula? If so, which methodologies were employed and to what extent were these successful?

Other suggestions...

In conclusion, this paper was intended to frame a set of criteria that unites global studies with issues-centered education. These criteria were developed from the rationale and application of various approaches to global studies. The global studies course currently taught at Hunterdon Central Regional High School, a hybrid of various global studies approaches, was used to illustrate how the criteria unites the goals of global studies and issues-centered education. This paper also presented some findings from a preliminary study designed to gain some insight, albeit limited, from a group of students who experienced both a global issues education course and United States History approached chronologically. This preliminary study and the comments of panelists and participants in this CUFA session may provide guidance about future inquiry in this field. Hopefully this panel discussion and subsequent dialogue at this annual meeting will spur further discussion, discourse, and research into the theoretical and practical applications of global issues education.

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